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Flagstaff Open Space Newsletter – December 2021

Happy holidays from Flagstaff's Open Spaces program! In case you need a quick stocking stuffer, we have free gift certificates available – for a hike with you!

Visit <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h0rquxLaj1dBFHk4YEV85IVeflwwGeB9/view> to print them!

Here's what's happening:

The **Open Spaces Commission has two vacancies!** If you love Flagstaff's Open Spaces, and want to be a part of the action, consider applying! Currently, we've got the Observatory Mesa Trail Plan process underway, and a committee planning a McMillan Mesa Prop 413/Rezone Celebration for April 9, 2022. For more information about being an Open Spaces Commissioner and to apply, visit <https://www.flagstaff.az.gov/3327/Open-Spaces-Commission>.

And speaking of the **Observatory Mesa Trail Plan**, the Open Spaces Commission will discuss and make a decision/recommendation on the Greater Observatory Mesa Trail Plan Proposal. The proposed plan will be used to gather robust public input, with a series of public meetings, and posting it on our website for viewing and public comment. The plan could include 25 mi of additional single track trail, 3 more formal access points, trail signage, 2 additional parking areas along Rt 66 near the city Public Works Yard and on Forest Rd 515, restore 5.79 mi of unauthorized trails and 11.78 mi of abandoned/decommissioned roads, and add 2 educational zones to increase student/adult awareness of environmental, cultural & historical significance. So keep an eye out for public participation in Spring/Summer 2022!

The **re-zoning of McMillan Mesa Natural Area** to officially be open space is underway! After gathering public input, the rezone application will be presented to Flagstaff's Planning & Zoning Commission for

and provide comments. To access these meetings, visit

<https://www.flagstaff.az.gov/1461/Streaming-City-Council-Meetings>.

Assuming the rezone application is approved, the Open Spaces Commission is planning a *celebration* of the rezone and the 5th anniversary of the overwhelming voter approval of Prop 413. That celebration is slated to take place on **April 9, 2022 at the Buffalo Park ramada**—so save the date! If you'd like to help with this planning, join the next planning meeting on January 20, 2022 at 4pm by contacting mjames@friendsofflagstaff.org for the Zoom link. Thank you!

Here's what else we've been up to:

Flagstaff **Cub Scout Pack 736** volunteered to plant native grasses and seeds on the slope of N Izabel St, on the east side of McMillan Mesa. These K–5th graders had so many different tasks to do: Digging a ditch along the top of the slope, raking, removing invasive weeds, spreading mulch and seed, covering the slope with jute netting, and pulling the existing native plants through the netting. In just a couple of hours, they completed about 40 feet! Thanks to Open Space Steward Denise Hudson for helping to manage their work.



Open Spaces hosted a **Mushroom Walk** for Open Space Stewards and other volunteers. Sara and Mike Dechter volunteered to lead the way on Observatory Mesa. It was a very popular event, with over 30 people, with a long waiting list!

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After months of planning, we hosted *Plein Air in Open Spaces* during the Flagstaff Festival of Science. Artists Tamara Hastie, Deb Michigian and Gwen Waring demonstrated and taught plein air (outdoor drawing and painting) watercolor and pastel techniques. About 275 kids and adults came to 3 events, and 50 of them submitted their artwork for display. The Webb Law Group offered their downtown office to host First Friday Art Walk on October 1st, where Black Lemon played music and visitors voted for the best artwork. The winning artwork (by Tamara Hastie Kayla Payne, and Emmory Hoefle) hung at the Flagstaff Aquaplex throughout October. Looking forward to next year, if you know of any artists, please send their contact information to sylvia.struss@flagstaffaz.gov!



The *Coconino County "Green Team"* and *Quality Connections* volunteered for trail work at Picture Canyon, after significant flood damage to many of the trails there. They spread cinders on low-lying trails to keep them from being muddy, dug reverse grades to divert storm water off the trails, and cleaned up trash along El Paso Flagstaff Road. Thanks all!

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Residents at *Working Alternatives Inc.*, which contracts with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to integrate federal probationers back into society, volunteered in November to ***clean up abandoned illegal campsites on McMillan Mesa***, as well as trail and footbridge repairs at Picture Canyon. They appreciate the opportunity to gain them self-esteem, work experience, and the opportunity to be outside in beautiful, rugged open space, often for the first time in decades. And we appreciate their hard work and humor!



Coconino High School student Oscar Landa Samano, as his senior project, planned a STEM Festival in November. Open Space staff Robert Wallace and AmeriCorps VISTA Sylvia Struss brought resin-made animal skulls to teach almost 50 students and parents about the skeletal characteristics of different animals that live on Flagstaff's Open Space properties. ***¡Tambien Lo Puedo Hacer!***



Volunteers ***Libby and Rick Kalinowski*** reported an ***illegal campsite on McMillan Mesa*** that had been there for 2 years. Flagstaff Police got the campers to evacuate, but there was a truckload of trash left behind. Libby and Rick hiked out 1 ½ miles and bagged up the trash and recyclables, but since it wasn't on a road or trail, they could not haul it out. Open Space Steward Natasha Stott spent a day

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Coming up:

1/12/22 10am **Picture Canyon Working Group** meeting via Zoom

1/12/22 4pm Planning & Zoning Commission meeting via Zoom re McMillan Mesa Re-zone application

1/20/22 4pm **McMillan Mesa Prop 413 Celebration** planning meeting via Zoom

1/24/22 4–6pm **Open Spaces Commission** meeting

1/24/22 5:30–6:30pm Flagstaff/Coconino Public Library's **Southwest Reads bookclub**, Condor: To the Brink and Back--The Life and Times of One Giant Bird by John Nielsen, via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88274012348>

2/15/22 3pm City Council meeting re McMillan Mesa Re-zone application

3/1/22 3pm City Council meeting re McMillan Mesa Re-zone application

4/9/22 Save the Date for McMillan Mesa Re-zone celebration at Buffalo Park!

In case you missed it...

Flagstaff Festival of Science talks are all available to watch! Check out their YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/FlagstaffFestivalofScience/videos>.



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